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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002482

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SUBJECT: BLACK SEA: ROMANIA/BLACK SEA HARMONY AND BLACK SEA
FORUM

REF: ANKARA 1958

Classified By: Counselor for Political-Military Affairs Timothy A. Bett
s for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Turkey appreciates our efforts to persuade Romania and Bulgaria to join Operation BLACK SEA HARMONY (OBSH), and asks that we weigh in again with the GOR prior to a May 9 Turkey-Romania bilateral on the subject. MFA told us May 4 that Romania has agreed to begin negotiations on joining, and Bulgaria seems to be leaning toward joining as well, but both could use further encouragement. However, our MFA interlocutor angrily alleged that Romania attempted to mislead Bulgarian officials by exaggerating the level at which Turkey plans to attend the June 6 Black Sea Forum in Bucharest (he added that Turkey will likely send a minister). We agreed to relay the request that the U.S. weigh in with the Bulgarians and Romanians. End summary.

¶2. (C) MFA Deputy Director General for Security Policy Serdar Kilic called us in May 4 to request further U.S. assistance in persuading Romania and Bulgaria to agree to join Turkey's maritime interdiction operation, Operation BLACK SEA HARMONY (OBSH). Kilic thanked us for apparently going some way in turning Romania around, since it has agreed to begin discussions with Turkey on the operation. He believes, however, that both Bulgaria and Romania are not yet fully convinced. Kilic asked that we weigh in with Romania again ASAP, as Turkey and Romania will meet again on this issue on May 9. He added that Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania will likely hold trilateral discussions on OBHS soon, perhaps in early June.

¶3. (C) Kilic said he engaged in "very fruitful" discussions with the Bulgarians on the margins of last week's NATO Ministerial in Sofia. He felt the GOB had been ill-informed on the particulars of OBHS and what kind of commitment it entailed, and that the Turkish delegation had "filled this gap." For example, Sofia had been concerned that it would have to turn over control of its naval assets to another country. Not so, explained Kilic. Turkey's concept is that countries will monitor maritime traffic in their own territorial or EEZ waters, then report the data to a central OBHS information center. According to Kilic, the Bulgarians were positive toward joining and will run the issue up their bureaucratic chain of command. He did think a positive word from the U.S. would be helpful to ensure the "right" decision.

¶4. (C) Kilic also asked for our help on a more delicate matter. Apparently, Bulgarian emboffs in Bucharest had told

Turkish emboffs that GOR officials had told GOB officials that Turkey will participate in the June 6 Black Sea Forum at the Prime Minister level "or higher." Kilic said he had been present at FonMin Gul's bilateral with the Romanians in Sofia, and that Gul had clearly stated that the level of GOT participation had yet to be decided. Kilic said this alleged "lie" by the Romanians could create a crisis of confidence between Bucharest and Ankara. He emphasized that Allies should not behave this way.

¶5. (C) We said we would pass this on to Washington, but we added that the USG firmly supports senior GOT participation in the Forum. Kilic recited familiar Turkish arguments about the Forum: He said he could not see the reason for it. If, as the Romanians claim, there is a need for high-level guidance from Black Sea regional leaders on certain issues, why not convene a BSEC summit? Kilic averred that the other littoral states are cool toward the Romanian initiative, but as Romania is an Ally Turkey will send a senior representative so Bucharest can "save face." This representative will most likely be a minister, but not the Prime Minister. Kilic said Turkey believes the Forum should be a one-shot deal, and, based on his reading of the GOR paper on the Forum, averred the concept "is going nowhere."

¶6. (C) COMMENT: Kilic's annoyance at Romania's alleged/alleged attempt to mislead another government as to the level of Turkey's participation in the Black Sea Forum only demonstrates the rift in GOR-GOT relations over Black Sea issues. We cannot vouch for the bona fides of Kilic's account of what the GOR may or may not have done, but it might be useful to tell the Romanians that we are continuing to work on the GOT to send a senior representative to the

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Forum, and to further encourage Bucharest and Sofia to join OOSH. END COMMENT.

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